Provident Fund Commissioner (Gr. I) were given extension for six months each.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

Export of Wool And Woollen Items

*95. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE. Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have devised any plan to raise the exports of wool and woollen items; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): (a) and (b) The Plan for raising the export of woollen items is to expand the production base, to diversify the markets and to diversify the product range.

Export of Readymade Garments to Europe

"96. SHRI E. BALANANDAN:
SHRI MD. SALIM:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the country has greater prospects of export of readymade garments tc European community countries this year; and

(b) if so, what are the plans of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): (a) and (b) India's garment exports to European Economic Community have shown improvement in 1992 as compared to 1991 notwithstanding the recessionary conditions prevailing in the European Economic Community market. It is expected that during 1993, there will be further improvement. The establishment of single European Community (EC) market from 1st January, 1993 is also likely to contribute positively to our export performance.

Loss in Jute Market

*97. DR. SANJAYA SINH: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of Government has been drawn to a news item which appeared in the Indian Express dated the 25th January, 1993 under the caption 'India on the brink of lossing Rs 100-crores in Jute Market' stating that India is on the brink of losing 75 per cent of the world sacking market in jute if Government do not take steps to lobby the cause of jute entrepreneurs in the international market; and

(b) if so, what action Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The capability of the jute industry in India to manufacture and supply nontoxic jute bags has been publicised in various fora including the meetings of *the* International Jute Organisation in order to capture the market for packaging of foodstuffs.

Private sector Participation in Distribution of Coal

*98. SHRI P. UPENDRA:
SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently allowed private sector in coal as a part of the new distribution scheme;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what is the extent upto which the consumers would be benefited and the middlemen would be eliminated?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b) Coal India Ltd. have launched a scheme for developing wholesale trade in coal. Under this scheme, the subsidiary companies of Coal India Limited will appoint wholesale dealers on the basis of applications invited through open advertisements. It is stipulated that each dealer shall lift atleast 3000 tonnes of coai per month. Coal sold will be under Liberalised Sale Scheme. Dealers will have the freedom to sell coal and fix prices for such sale. Coal India Limited have already advertised the scheme inviting applications for appointment of wholesale dealers.

(c) Since these wholesale dealers will be located near the consumption centres, coal will be readily available to small consumers from nearby sources. With easier availability of coal from these dealers the influence of middlemen is also likely to be reduced •substantially.

Supply of coal to Bihar

*99. DR. BAPU KALDATE:
SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Bihar have been persistently requesting for raising the royalty on coal;

(b) whether Central Government are aware of the acute scarcity of domestic coal in the State of Bihar;

(c) if so, what are the reasons for delay in settling the royalty on coal and by when the matter is likely to be settled;

(d) what is the existing supply of domestic coal to the State of Bihar as against the demand and what are the reasons for the short supply of domestic coal; and

(e) what steps have been taken by Government to augment the supply of domestic coal to Bihar to meet the shortages'?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (c) Yes, Sir. In accordance with the proviso to Section 9 (3) of the Mines & Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957 the Central Government is empowered to amend the second schedule to the said Act for enhancing the rates of royalty only once in a period of three years. Since the rates of royalty were last revised w.e.f. 1.8.1991, the next upward revision will become due only after 1.8.1994.

(b) and (d) Yes, Sir. There has been short supply of soft coke to the State of Bihar as also other States. As against the monthly allocation of 60,000 tonnes of soft coke for the State of Bihar, the total soft coke supplies during the period April, 1992 to January, 1993 have been to the tune of 2,64,400 tonnes. The reasons for shortfall in supplies of soft coke to Bihar are as follows:—

(i) Restriction imposed by the Pollution Control Board, Bihar as a result of which the soft coke production in BCCL had to be curtailed.

(ii) The Government of Bihar, pursuant to withdrawal of the provisions of the order controlling the distribution of soft coke in Bihar, had stopped issuance of recommendations to the soft coke dealers affecting supplies.

(e) Following steps have been taken to augment the supply of coal based domestic fuels to the State of Bihar:

(i) A relaxation has been obtained from Pollution Control Board, Bihar for manufacturing soft coke in BCCL. The production has started and 59,000 tonnes of soft coke has been produced during April-January, 1993.